DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 063 081 RE 004 114

AUTHOR Dauzat, Sam V.
TITLE Wise Utilization of Human Resources: The Paraprofessional in the Reading Program: Paraprofessionals and Reading.
PUB DATE May 72
NOTE 10p.; Paper presented at meeting of International Reading Association Meeting (17th, Detroit, Michigan, May 10-13, 1972)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS Educational Needs; *Paraprofessional School Personnel; *Reading Instruction; *Role Perception; *Teacher Responsibility; *Team Teaching

ABSTRACT

Paraprofessionals have valuable roles to enact in the effective reading program; however, paraprofessionals in the classroom are justified only to the extent to which educational benefit accrues to the children in that classroom. Professionals must devise strategies whereby the resources in the classroom may be most effectively utilized and whereby the professional and paraprofessional may function as an educational team. Professionals must not squander on non-productive tasks the potential source of rich opportunities for children which the paraprofessional represents. The professional teacher of reading must assume the key role, while the paraprofessional assumes a supporting one; but this relationship should enhance the opportunities of each to make a positive educational impact on the lives of children in the reading program. (AW)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

ED 063081

Dr. Sam V. Dauzat
Reading Center
Louisiana Tech University
Ruston, Louisiana 71270

WISE UTILIZATION OF HUMAN RESOURCES: THE PARAPROFESSIONAL IN THE READING PROGRAM

Paraprofessionals and Reading
May 11, 1972
10:30 - 11:30

The era of ecology has dawned, generating intense concern for the wise utilization of resources and protection of the natural environment. The conservation movement would be a parody without adequate emphasis on the wise utilization of the most precious of all resources--the irreplaceable human resources. The era of conservation has made an impact in the field of education, too, as indicated by attempts to efficiently deploy all human resources currently available in the schools to the end that all children may be provided with educationally sound and beneficial experiences. The era of conservation

RE004 114

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY SAM V. DAUZAT

TO ERIC AND ORGANIZATIONS OPERATING UNDER AGREEMENTS WITH THE U.S. OFFICE OF EDUCATION. FURTHER REPRODUCTION OUTSIDE THE ERIC SYSTEM REQUIRES PERMISSION OF THE COPYRIGHT OWNER."

of human resources set the stage for the appearance of the paraprofessional on the education scene.

Enter the Paraprofessional

The new educational cast members have experienced a brief history marked by periods of rejection, periods of resistance, and periods of semi-acceptance by professional educators. Since the stormy 1956 beginnings, paraprofessionals have been employed in thousands of school systems within the United States with some remarkable and some disappointing results. Within the last decade, paraprofessional roles have evolved from such unproductive tasks as monitoring hallways and collecting monies to roles which help to make education meaningful to children. The evolution of the paraprofessional roles has also met with ambivalent feelings among professionals, particularly those who view their classrooms as inner sanctums. However, recent developments in the field of education such as increased school enrollments, pleas for accountability, implementation of new school organizational patterns, curricular revisions toward relevance, and demands for increased individualization of instruction have necessitated new roles for all participants in the educational drama.

Since neither time nor energy would permit a single professional to fulfill the educational needs of all

children with whom he is entrusted and to perform the non-professional tasks which traditionally accompany teaching, it was necessary that some means be secured to give assistance to teachers. The paraprofessional seems to have provided the solution to several professional problems. It is through the inclusion of the paraprofessional that the professional's teaching talents may be released; it is through the work of the paraprofessional that the "professional appendix" of non-professional duties may be severed from the role of the professional; and it is through the paraprofessional that the professional educator may be granted his "right to teach".

The paraprofessional serves to enhance the role of the professional educator, freeing him to perform strictly professional functions. Because of the potential benefit which may accrue to the children by the inclusion of paraprofessionals in the classroom, educators must view paraprofessionals as valuable and vital members of the educational team. Unfortunately, such has not been the case in many school systems. The lack of clearly defined roles and responsibilities of both professionals and paraprofessionals has contributed to the negative and ambivalent responses toward paraprofessionals. Many problems may be forestalled when roles

and responsibilities are firmly established and clearly understood by all parties concerned. Paraprofessional duties should be determined through appraising each individual's educational experiences, special abilities, and areas of competence.

New Roles in Demand

Current practices in the use of paraprofessionals merely tap the surface of this potentially rich educational resource. Education which is relevant and personalized, as demanded by comtemporary society, is an attainable goal only if schools utilize the available human resources more effectively. More effective utilization means that all professionals must assume new, more highly professional roles and that some paraprofessionals must assume more instructionally-oriented roles, as dictated by their role descriptions and special competencies. Such practices as confining the duties of the paraprofessional to housekeeping chores remove the paraprofessional from the scene where his most valuable contribution may be made--in the classroom serving as a human resource to the learning processes of children.

Need for Effective Utilization in Reading Programs

Nowhere is the need for individualization of instruction more firmly established than in the reading

program. Therefore, an effective utilization pattern for professionals and paraprofessionals in the reading program is urgently needed. The appalling statistics relative to numbers of non-readers and underachievers in reading, numbers of school dropouts due to ineffective reading behaviors, and numbers of unemployables because of inability to read effectively clearly emphasize the need for wise use of resources, both human and material, in providing more effective instruction in reading. Wise use of human resources in the reading program means the appropriate casting and the correct role assignments of all participants in the reading program.

The reading teacher and the paraprofessional must form an instructional team with complementary roles and with the common goal of enabling each student to become an independent reader inspired with a love of reading. The reading teacher must assume a leadership role in the team, supervising and guiding the paraprofessional. The reading teacher must maintain responsibility for diagnosing reading strengths and weaknesses and prescribing learning experiences designed to enable students to develop reading skills.

Role of Paraprofessional in the Reading Program

The paraprofessional may perform a multitude of functions and make key contributions in the reading

program. The paraprofessional may free the teacher to more effectively perform teaching roles and may support the teacher in instruction-related roles. Although paraprofessionals may give assistance in diverse ways, the focus of the following list of duties is on roles which are instruction-oriented and which require direct contact with children engaged in reading tasks. Certainly, the list is incomplete, but it should serve to stimulate reading teachers to consider the merit of instruction-related roles in the reading program. It should be noted that all duties which require direct contact with pupils must be performed under the guidance and supervision of the reading teacher. Suggested duties for the paraprofessional in the reading program are as follows.

1. Apply readability formulas to books and materials in the classroom thereby enabling teachers to help children select more appropriate books in terms of level of difficulty as well as interest level. Knowledge of the readability levels of books and materials may also enable teachers to make the necessary adjustments in teaching in the content areas other than reading. Paraprofessionals may also help children select books appropriate in terms of readability levels and interests of children.

2. Prepare teaching materials in reading such as specific word charts, vocabulary cards, phonic word wheels, sentence strips, picture-word cards, etc. Research supports the fact that children learn through a variety of media. However, teachers' busy schedules have made it next to impossible for them to construct the multitude of devices which might make reading skills more easily attainable for children. Paraprofessionals may also prepare teaching materials which motivate reading behaviors such as teaching games and devices.

3. Reinforce specific reading skills through the implementation of a teaching game or drill exercise prescribed by the reading teacher. In the process of learning reading skills children need many reinforcement activities. Those which require adult supervision may be directed by the paraprofessionals. However, it should be noted that paraprofessionals must not be responsible for introducing new reading skills.

4. Tutor children with special reading skills problems under the supervision of the reading teacher. Current research supports the fact that children make gains in reading ability under such programs. The paraprofessional should implement the teaching plan designed by the reading teacher but should not be expected to design teaching strategies independently.

5. Supervise children's independent work in reading such as workbook activities or worksheet-type activities, thereby freeing the teacher to give assistance to the other children.

6. Listen to the oral reading of children, perhaps even noting areas of consistent weaknesses for referral to the teacher of reading. It has long been recognized that children learn to refine reading skills by putting them into practice. The paraprofessional can provide the audience for purposeful oral reading particularly vital for remedial readers and disadvantaged children.

7. Extend the children's background of experiences by reading to them. Children must have words and concepts within their listening-meaning vocabularies and, perhaps, speaking vocabularies before they can be expected to read those words and concepts. Paraprofessionals in the reading classroom can provide the children with the kind of oral reading experiences to which they are entitled in the total reading program.

8. Provide children with the supportive environment crucial to the development and maintenance of positive self-concepts which are intensely relevant to desirable reading behaviors. The paraprofessional in the classroom increases each child's chances for personal attention, thereby helping each establish a more positive sense of

worth. Effective reading behaviors flourish in such an environment.

9. Assist in the development of reading experience charts, both group and individual. Children expand their reading vocabularies through the graphic representation of their own experiences. Those children who lack the mechanical skills necessary to record their experiences independently should not be denied this learning opportunity. Specific activities for the paraprofessional include 1) taking children's dictation for recording as reading experiences; 2) supervising as children illustrate experience stories; and 3) manuscripting or typing children's dictated sentences on reading experience charts.

10. Supervise small group dramatization of stories read by children. Children's oral reading skills and interpretive skills can be greatly enhanced by such activities, and paraprofessionals can be most effective in guiding them.

11. Supervise peer-tutoring in reading skills. Peer-tutoring holds great promise as an avenue for helping children extend reading skills. However, such activities require some adult supervision to minimize social disruptions which sometimes ensue.

12. Prepare instructional media designed to motivate

recreational reading behaviors. Clever posters, bulletin boards, book fairs, etc., frequently encourage recreational reading. Paraprofessionals may be key persons in the preparation and placement of such devices.

Summary

Paraprofessionals have valuable roles to enact in the effective reading program. However, paraprofessionals in the classroom are justified only to the extent to which educational benefit accrues to the children in that classroom. Professionals must devise strategies whereby the resources in the classroom may be most effectively utilized and whereby the professional and paraprofessional may function as an educational team. Professionals must not squander the potential source of rich opportunities for children--the paraprofessional--on non-productive tasks. Waste of natural resources is deplorable, but waste of human resources is intolerable.

The professional teacher of reading must assume the key role while the paraprofessional assumes a supporting role, enhancing the opportunities of each to make a positive impact on the educational lives of children in the reading program.